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MINERAL REGIONS OF LAKE SUPERIOR,

AS KNOWN

FROM THEIR FIRST DISCOVERY TO 1865.

BY HON. H. M. RICE, OF SAINT PAUL.

One hundred and twenty-one years ago there were found, north Lake of Superior, several "large lumps of the finest virgin copper." The finder wrote: "In the honest exultation of my heart at so important a discovery, I directly showed it to the Company, (Hudson's Bay Company) but the thanks I met with may be easily judged from the system of their conduct. The fact, without any inquiry into the reality of it, was treated as a chimerical illusion, and a stop arbitrarily put to all further search into the matter, by the absolute lords of the soil."

The first attempt made to obtain copper from the Lake Superior region was by a company of adventurers from England, soon after the conquest of Canada, "but the distracted state of affairs in America obliged them to relinquish their scheme." The next effort was made in 1771, by a company who petitioned for, and obtained, a charter from the British Government. The partners, in England, were His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, Mr. Secretary Townsend, Sir Samuel Tutchet, Baronet; Mr. Baxter, Consul of the Empress of Russia, and Mr. Cruickshank; in America, Sir William Johnson, Baronet, Mr. Bostwick, Mr. Baxter and Alexander Henry.

"In 1770 (says Henry,) Mr. Baxter, who had sailed for England, returned, bringing with him papers by which, with Mr. Bostwick and himself, I was constituted a joint agent and partner, in, and for, a company of adventurers for working the mines of Lake Superior. We passed the winter together at the Sault de Sainte Marie, and built a barge, fit for the navgation of the lake; at the same time laying the keel of a sloop of forty-tons. Early in May, 1771, the lake becoming navigable, we departed from Point aux Pius, our ship yard, at which there is a safe harbour, and of which the distance from the Sault is three leagues. We sailed for the Island of Yellow Sands, promising ourselves to make our fortunes, in defiance of its serpents." After coasting about for five days, they returned to Point aux Pius, where they erected an air-furnace. The assayer made a report on the ores which had been collected, stating that the lead ore contained silver in the proportion of forty ounces to a ton, "but the copper ore, only in very small proportions indeed." Facts developed by recent

explorations go far to show, that the day is not far distant when the silver mines of Lake Superior will rank among the most prolific in the world.

Soon after testing the ores at Point aux Pius, the expedition coasted westward for the mouth of the Ontonagon river. Henry says: "Proposing to ourselves to make a trial on the hill, till we were better able to go to work upon the solid rock, we built a house, and sent to the Sault de Sainte Marie for provisions. At the spot pitched upon for the commencement of our preparations, a green-colored water which tinged iron of a copper color, issued from the hill, and this the miners called a leader. Having arranged everything for the miners during the winter, we returned to the Sault. Early in the spring of 1772, we sent a boat load of provisions; but it came back on the 20th day of June, bringing with it, to our surprise, the whole establishment of miners. They reported, that in the course of the winter, they had penetrated forty feet into the hill; but, that on the arrival of the thaw, the clay on which, on account of its stiffness, they relied, and neglected to secure it by supporters, had fallen in;—that to recommence their search would be attended with much labor and cost;—that from the detached masses of metal which, to the last, had daily presented themselves, they supposed there might be, ultimately, reached some body of the same, but could form no conjecture of its distance." They concluded that the work would require more men than could be fed; and their operations in that quarter ended.

A little over eighty-two years ago, the independence of the United States was acknowledged by Great Britain, in a treaty concluded at Paris, in which the boundaries were agreed upon. By reference to that instrument, it will be observed that the northern line, after striking the River St. Lawrence, follows up that stream to the great lakes, thence through the middle of the same, and their connecting rivers, to Lake Superior; thence through Lake Superior, *northward* of the Isles Royal and Philippean, to the Long Lake, now known as Pigeon River; thus securing to what is now Minnesota, about one hundred and fifty miles of the north shore of that inland sea, and believed to contain the richest copper and silver deposits known in the world. Benjamin Franklin was one of the commissioners to the treaty. It is supposed that he obtained information in France of the richness of that region; and, to his great foresight, we are mostly indebted for that valuable acquisition. In fact, he wrote that the time would come when the American people would consider the part he took in securing that vast mineral region to them as one of the greatest acts of his life. Seventy-five years after the death of that great and good man, the people of Minnesota are about to realize the importance of the vast interests secured by that far-seeing statesman.

On the 5th day of August, 1826, Lewis Cass and Thomas L. McKenney, commissioners on the part of the United States, made and concluded a treaty with the Chippewa Indians at Fond du Lac, Lake Superior, by which the Chippewas granted to the United States the right to search for, and

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carry away, any metals or minerals from any part of their country. No efforts under this grant were ever made; but from that period (and even before,) explorations, from time to time, were made by individuals; and many indications of rich mines, (now within the limits of Minnesota,) were discovered. Licenses to trade with the Indians were obtained,—buildings for the ostensible purpose of trade were erected, and possession maintained for many years, in hopes the Government would extinguish the Indian title to the land, so that individual titles might be acquired. Time and expense caused the abandonment of most of these points, and a consequent dissipation of the bright visions raised by the knowledge of the wealth which was beyond the reach of the discoverers.

Under the old permit system, many locations, three miles square, were made on Lake Superior;—several on and near the Montreal river—some on Bad River, south of La Pointe—three on the main land, opposite La Pointe—two or three were made near Superior City. on the Nemadji, or Left Hand river, and one settler's claim about twenty miles north of Superior. Several locations were made in the valley of the St. Croix river; explorations, to a limited extent, and recent developments, give great hopes that the Falls of the St. Croix may, at no distant day, compete with some of the towns of Lake Superior in the shipment of copper. Two of the mines south of Superior are being worked, both giving assurances that success will amply reward those engaged in the work. Last year, a New York company was formed for the purpose of working one of the locations on Bad River. The work was commenced, and has been vigorously prosecuted with flattering prospects. On the 30th of September, 1854, the Chippewa Indians, by a treaty made at La Pointe, ceded all their lands on the north shore of Lake Superior to the United States; thus removing all obstructions to the development of the rich mines within the limits of Minnesota. In the same year, an association was formed by gentlemen residing in this state and Ohio for the purpose of securing a title to several well known locations within the country ceded, which purpose they accomplished some four or five years afterwards. The association was known under the name of R. B. Carlton & Co. On the 28th day of September, 1858, a meeting of the persons composing the association was held in the city of Cleveland, Ohio, and, among others, the following actions were taken:

WHEREAS, on the 25th day of September, 1854, a portion of the undersigned entered into an agreement for the purpose of obtaining Mineral Locations and Lands in what is now the State of Minnesota, which Association was known by the name of R B. Carlton & Co.: *and whereas* certain lands and locations have been secured under said agreement, the legal and equitable titles of which are held in the individual name or names of some of the undersigned, or some other person or persons, but in trust for the said Association: *and whereas*, the title to other lands is in process of being secured, which, when secured, will be in the individual name or names of some of the undersigned, or some other person, but for the use of the undersigned: *and whereas*, it is contemplated that other Lands and Mines may be procured or required: *and whereas*, the interests of the parties to said original agreement have been by assignment transferred with the assent of all the parties thereto and hereto, so that all the Lands, Mines,

and benefits, secured or attempted to be secured, under and by virtue of original agreement.

And this agreement shall be divided into eighty Shares or Parts, and are now owned and held as follows: to-wit,

John S. Watrous, two shares. equal to 2-80ths.
Reuben B. Carlton, eight shares, equal to 8-80ths.
Josiah Tallmadge, four shares, equal to 4-80ths.
Joseph W. Lynde, six shares, equal to 6-80ths.
George E. Nettleton, four shares, equal to 4-80ths.
William H. Newton, four shares, equal to 4-80ths.
Edwin A. C. Hatch, eight shares, equal to 8-80ths.
John T. Newton, two shares, equal to 2-80ths.
Henry B Payne, three shares, equal to 3-80ths.
H J. Jewett. six shares, equal to 6-80ths.
Paine & Wade. three shares, equal to 3-80ths.
Julien A. H Hasbrouck, six shares, equal to 6-80ths.
James B. Beck, four shares, equal to 4-80ths.
Charles E. Rittenhouse, four shares, equal to 4-80ths.
Joel D. Cruttenden, four shares, equal to 4-80ths.
Nathan Myrick, four shares, equal to 4-80ths.

Trustees herein mentioned for the uses and purposes herein expressed, eight shares, equal to 8-80ths.

Now, it is agreed and stipulated by all the parties hereto, as follows, to-wit: that all the lands, mineral localities and property of every kind and description, which has already been, and all which shall hereafter be secured, under or in pursuance of said first mentioned agreement, and this agreement shall be conveyed to Henry B. Payne, Robert F. Payne, and Edwin A. C. Hatch, to be held by them, the survivor and survivors of them, who shall hold the legal title of the same, in trust for the uses and purposes, and upon the terms and conditions herein expressed, and for no other purposes, conditions or terms, and with all the powers, authorities and privileges herein expressed.

Hon. Henry B. Payne, of Cleveland, was appointed President, and Jas. Wade, jr., Secretary. Certificates of stock were issued. The next meeting of the stockholders was called by the trustees, and held at Bayfield, Wisconsin, July 27, 1863, which meeting adjourned to Du Luth, Minnesota, where it convened, July 31, 1863; and on the 3d of the next month, August, on motion of B. F. Paine, it was unanimously resolved, that they proceed to organize two companies under the laws of Minnesota. Hon. Geo. L. Becker presented drafts of articles of associations for a corporation to be known as the North Shore Mining Company; and, also, another corporation to be known as the French River Mining Company, which were approved, acknowledged by the corporators, and ordered to be placed on record as required by law. The capital stock in each company was $100,000, divided in 2,000 shares of $50 each. The first meeting of the corporators and stockholders of each of said new companies was held in Cleveland, Ohio, November 2, 1863, at which meeting the "French River Mining Company" and the "North Shore Mining Company" were organized by the election of boards of five directors each—three, residents of Ohio, one of the city of New York, and one of the State of Minnesota. The directors organized by appointing Hon. Henry B. Payne, president, and James Wade, jr., secretary and treasurer. The trustees of the Carlton & Co. association conveyed to the "French River Mining Company" the south-

west quarter, and lots Nos. 3 and 4 of section No. 17, in town 51 north of range 12, west, in Saint Louis county, Minnesota, containing 165 16–100 acres. The trustees conveyed to the "North Shore Mining Company" the south-east quarter of section 25, town 52, range 12, west, in same county, During the year 1864, a shaft was sunk, by the North Shore Company, to the depth of 20 feet, and by French River Company, 40 feet—both giving indications of valuable results.

At a meeting of the stockholders, held on the 6th of July, 1864, Gen. A. S. Sanford, of Cleveland, was chosen president, in place of H. B. Payne. resigned, but who still remains as one of the directors. The French River Company sent up men, tools, and supplies sufficient to prosecute the work, day and night, during the winter. The work is in charge of Frank Salisbury, who is sinking a shaft one hundred and fifty feet from the old one, with the intention of drifting from one to the other. I have, perhaps, gone too much into detail; but if the anticipations of those who have given this subject much attention shall be realized, the silent operations and large expenditures that have been made, will, hereafter, render any facts, connected with the first developments of the mineral wealth of Minnesota, interesting in the future. But a few years ago, those engaged in developing the copper mines on Lake Superior, within the state of Michigan, were looked upon as visionary speculators. The completion of the Sault St. Mary canal gave such facilities as enabled them to draw capital from all parts of the United States and to convince the most skeptical that the basin of that vast inland sea contained untold wealth. Of the many mines in successful operation, a single one—the Quincy, yielded, the past season, 3,102,532 pounds, or 1,551 tons, 532 pounds of copper, worth one million five hundred thousand dollars. When we have communication by railroad to the head of lake navigation, the most skeptical cannot over rate the mineral wealth that will be developed, nor the commercial advantages that will inure to the state—enriching and infusing new life into every city, town and hamlet.

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